

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3049

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PFOR PINT UR SHUM
SUBJECT: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON THE DISSIDENT FRONT

1. SUMMARY. ONE BRIGHT SPOT IN AN OTHERWISE GLOOMY PICTURE IS CONFIRMATION THAT IMPRISONED HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST KOVALEV HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO A RELATIVELY WELL EQUIPPED PRISON HOSPITAL IN LENINGRAD. JEWISH REFUSENIK ACTIVISTS SHCHARANSKIY AND SLEPAK (BOTH ALSO MEMBERS OF THE ORLOV CSCE GROUP) ARE UNDER HEAVY SURVEILLANCE, AND SHCHARANSKIY REPORTEDLY EXPECTS TO BE ARRESTED ON CHARGES OF TREASON (UNDER ARTICLE 64 OF THE RSPSR CRIMINAL CODE). THE WIVES OF ORLOV AND GINZBURG MAY STAGE A HUNGER STRIKE DURING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO MOSCOW AND HAVE APPROACHED ACQUAINTANCES IN THE WESTERN DIPLOMATIC CORPS REGARDING SEVERAL OTHER SCHEMES TO ASSIST THEIR HUSBANDS. NOTHING DEFINITE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE CHARGES AGAINST GINZBURG OR THE OTHER CSCE GROUP MEMBERS PRESENTLY UNDER ARREST. GROUP MEMBER LANDA IS SCHEDULED TO BE TRIED FOR INADVERTANTLY CAUSING A FIRE IN HER APARTMENT. GROUP MEMBER MNYUKH AND LOCAL AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CHAIRMAN TURCHIN HAVE NOT BEEN HARASSED RECENTLY, NOR HAVE MEMBERS OF THE LITHUANIAN CHAPTER OF THE ORLOV GROUP. PRESSURE CONTINUES AGAINST NATIONALIST DISSIDENT IN LITHUANIA, HOWEVER, THE ORLOV GROUP NOW HAS "SUB-GROUPS" ON PSYCHIATRY AND THE ARTS, AND WE UNDERSTAND A THIRD UNIT ON RELIGION MAY BE
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FORMED. END SUMMARY.

2. DISSIDENT CONTACTS TELL US THAT SERGEY KOVALEV'S WIFE WAS INFORMED BY MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICIALS MARCH 1 THAT HER HUSBAND, WHO MAY HAVE CANCER, WAS TRANSFERRED TO A RELATIVELY WELL EQUIPPED PRISON HOSPITAL IN LENINGRAD. MRS. KOVALEV HAD PETITIONED SOVIET AUTHORITIES REGARDING SUCH A TRANSFER, AND, AS

THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, SAKHAROV HAD IN HIS LETTER OF FEBRUARY 17 REQUESTED THE PRESIDENT'S INTERCESSION ON KOVALEV'S BEHALF. MRS. KOVALEV'S FRIENDS BELIEVE SHE MAY BE ALLOWED TO VISIT HER HUSBAND WHILE HE IS IN LENINGRAD.

3. JEWISH REFUSENIK ACTIVISTS AND CSCE GROUP MEMBERS SHCHARANSKIY AND SLEPAK ARE CURRENTLY UNDER HEAVY SURVEILLANCE. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN LOS ANGELES TIMES BUREAU CHIEF ROBERT TOTH MET WITH THEM NEAR HIS APARTMENT MARCH 7, TWO AUTOMOBILES OCCUPIED BY PLAINS CLOTHESMEN APPEARED. TOTH'S CAR WAS STOPPED AS HE ATTEMPTED TO DRIVE SHCHARANSKIY AND SLEPAK INTO HIS APARTMENT PARKING LOT. AT THE INSTIGATION OF A PLAINCLOTHESMAN, THE MILITIAMAN ON DUTY THERE ASKED THE TWO MEN TO GET OUT OF TOTH'S CAR, DESPITE TOTH'S PROTESTS THAT THE TWO WERE HIS GUESTS. SHCHARANSKIY'S IDENTITY CARD ("PASSPORT") WAS TAKEN BY THE MILITIAMAN, HANDED OVER TO A PLAINCLOTHESMAN, THEN RETURNED WHEN SHCHARANSKIY REQUESTED IT. THERE WERE NO ARRESTS, AND THE TWO MEN WERE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO TOTH'S CAR. TOTH PARKED NEARBY AND INTERVIEWED SHCHARANSKIY AND SLEPAK; THE TWO SURVEILLANCE CARS FOLLOWED, BUT NO ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO INTERFERE. TOTH THEN DOVE THE TWO MEN TO SLEPAK'S APARTMENT WITHOUT INCIDENT.

4. THE TWO REPORTEDLY TOLD TOTH THAT THE APARTMENTS OF SHCHARANSKIY, LERNER, AND TWO OTHER REFUSENIKS WERE SEARCHED MARCH 4. ALL OF SHCHARANSKIY'S PAPERS AND PERSONAL DOCUMENTS, EXCEPT HIS IDENTITY PASSPORT, WERE CONFISCATED. SHCHARANSKIY, WHO FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE MARCH 4 IZVESTIYA "EXPOSE", BELIEVES HE WILL BE ARRESTED FOR TREASON AND GIVEN A LENGTHLY PRISON TERM. HE MADE A POINT OF TELLING TOTH THAT IF HE IS ARRESTED

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HE WILL NOT VOLUNTARILY PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE AUTHORITIES (APPARENTLY FEARING HE MAY BE FORCE TO "CONFESS" OR IMPLICATE OTHERS, OR THAT THE AUTHORITIES MAY FALSELY CLAIM THAT HE HAS COOPERATED WITH THEM). AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS, SHCHARANSKIY HAS BEEN A KEY SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT REFUSENIK AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES.

5. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE WIVES OF ORLOV AND GINZBURG, PLUS A NUMBER OF THEIR FRIENDS, MAY STAGE A WELL-PUBLICIZED HUNGER STRIKE TO COINCIDE WITH THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO MOSCOW. THE TWO WIVES HAVE RECENTLY APPROACHED ACQUAINTANCES IN THE WESTERN DIPLOMATIC CORPS REGARDING SEVERAL OTHER SCHEMES TO AID ORLOV AND GINZBERG. THE SWISS EMBASSY, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS BEEN ASKED IF A WAY CAN BE FOUND TO MAKE ORLOV A MEMBER OF THE SWISS ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND/OR FACILITATE HIS EXIT TO THE WEST. (THE SWISS ASKED US FOR DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT ORLOV'S SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS AND WORK, WHICH WE DO NOT HAVE). WE UNDERSTAND OTHERS INCLUDING THE AUSTRIANS HAVE BEEN ASKED TO EXTEND INVITATIONS FOR ORLOV AND GINZBURG TO LECTURE

ABROAD, AS WELL AS TO MAKE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE TWO MEN.

6. NOTHING DEFINITE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE CHARGES AGAINST ORLOV, GINZBURG, RUDENKO AND TIKHIY. A FRIEND OF GINZBURG'S WHO WAS PRESENT WHEN GINZBURG'S APARTMENT IN TARUSA WAS SEARCHED APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK AGO, SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED TO SHCHARANSKIY IN MOSCOW THAT ARTICLE 70 OF THE RSFSR CRIMINAL CODE (YNT-SOVIET AGITATION AND PROPAGANDA) WAS WRITTEN ON THE SEARCH DOCUMENTS. WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN GINZBURG WILL EVENTUALLY BE CHARGED SOLELY WITH VIOLATING THIS ARTICLE OF THE RSFSR CRIMINAL CODE. INDEED, HIS COLLEAGUES FEEL HE PROBABLY WILL BE CHARGE WITH NOT ONLY ARTICLE 70 BUT ALSO WITH VIOLATING THE LAW CONCERNING FOREIGN CURRENCY TRANSACTIONS.

7. ANOTHER ORLOV GROUP MEMBER, MALVA LANDA, WAS SCHEDULED
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TO STAND TRIAL LAST WEEK FOR INADVERTANTLY STARTING A FIRE IN HER APARTMENT LATE LAST YEAR. THE TRIAL HAS BEEN POSTPONED (LANDA REPORTEDLY ADMITS SHE MAY HAVE ACCIDENTLY CAUSED THE FIRE, BUT FEELS HER MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORLOV GROUP HAS PROMPTED THE AUTHORITIES TO BRING CHARGES AGAINST HER).

8. A LITHUANIAN NATIONALIST DISSIDENT RECENTLY TOLD US THAT THE LITHUANIAN BRANCH OF THE ORLOV GROUP HAS NOT BEEN HARASSED, ALTHOUGH AUTHORITIES IN LIGHUANIAN CONTINUE THEIR PRESSURE AGAINST LITHUANIAN NATIONALISM. IN CONNECTION WITH THE LITHUANIAN NATIONAL HOLIDAY FEBRUARY 16, FOR EXAMPLE, LOCAL AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY CITED A FICTITIOUS MURDER OF A VILNIUS MILITIA OFFICER AS AN EXCUSE TO SEND NUMEROUS MVD TROOPS INTO VIL'NIUS ON THE EVE OF THE HOLIDAY AND TO SEARCH LITHUANIANS COMING INTO THE CITY FOR THE UNOFFICIAL CELEBRATION.

9. IN ADDITION TO TWO "SUB-GROUPS" OF THE ORLOV GROUP, DEALING RESPECTIVELY WITH PSYCHIATRY AND THE ARTS, WE HAVE HEARD THAT STEPS ARE UNDERWAY TO ESTABLISH A THIRD UNIT WHICH WILL SPECIALIZE IN RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS.

10. FINALLY, WE ARE TOLD THAT CHAIRMAN OF THE SOVIET CHAPTER OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL VALENTIN TURCHIN HAS NOT BEEN HARASSED SINCE HIS OFFICIAL WARNING (SEPTTEL) SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. ORLOV GROUP MEMBER YURIY MNYUKH HAS ALSO BEEN LEFT ALONE, ALTHOUGH SHORTLY AFTER HE DROVE TO THE AIRPORT TO SAY GOODBY TO COLLEAGUE LYNDY ALEKSEYEVA LAST MONTH HE DISCOVERED THAT SOMEONE HAD DUMPED A LARGE QUANTITY OF SALT INTO THE GASOLINE TANK OF HIS CAR.

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